(e) whether any working group to study the wastage of foreign exchange and increase in prices of medicines which are allowed duty concessions is proposed to be set-up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) to (e) No, Sir. Rationalisation of Customs Duty on bulk drugs/intermediates and formulations is done from time to time to ensure easy availability of quality drugs and formulations at reasonable prices in the market and encouragement to the indigenous industry. Requests/representations for reduction/increase of import duty are received from manufacturers and/or Industry Associations. These are examined and, if found justified, modifications in the import duties are recommended to the Ministry of Finance.

Decontrol of molasses

1354. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have lifted control of price and and distribution of molasses;

(b) if so, reasons behind the step and how it would benefit sugar industry;

(c) what have been the reaction of major sugarcane producing States; and

(d) how the Government propose to ensure fair implementation of molasses policy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) and (b) The Molasses Control Order, 1961 under which the prices and distribution of molasses were regulated has been rescinded on 10th June, 1993, with a view to removing control on prices and movement of molasses. This is to provide a better opportunity for all sectors dependent on molasses to function optimally.

(c) All States including the major sugar producing States are adjusting to the policy of decontrol over prices and movement of molasses.

(d) The objective of removing the control on prices and movement of molasses is to ensure that the commodity is freely available at market prices.

Non-operation of flights from Delhi to Dibrugarh

1355. SHRI BHADRESHWAR GOHAIN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the industrial establishment in upper Assam has been badly affected because of non-operation of flights to Dibrugarh from Delhi;

(b) whether Government propose to restart operation of flights to Dibrugarh; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) It is not possible to reintroduce services between Delhi and Dibrugarh at present because of crew constraints. However convenient connections have been provided to Dibrugarh via Calcutta for passengers desirous of travelling between Delhi and Dibrugarh.

Promotion of tourism in rural areas

1356. SHRI SHANTI TYAGI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Tourism Action Plan launched by Government proposes to draw certain rural areas in its fold to

help employment and economic growth in those areas; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government is satisfied with the performance of the ITDC hotels; and

(d) if not, what steps Government has taken or proposes to take to make them profitable and upto the mark?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The 11 travel circuits and destinations identified for intensive development as envisaged in the National Action Plan for tourism have considerable rural areas covered therein. The development of these circuits will generate substantial economic activities in these areas and help to create job opportunities both direct and indirect for local people.

(c) and (d) Performance of ITDC hotels has not come upto the expectations of the Government during the last three years due to a number of factors, which include the law and order position in some parts of the country, recurrent strikes in the national carriers and recession in many developed countries, etc.

ITDC on their own have taken steps which include product improvement, effective sales promotion, reservation tie ups with foreign travel agencies, participation in travel fora, greater thurst on advertising, special packages targetted at domestic as well as international tourist market, strict control over expenditure, training of manpower, etc.

Loss making domestic air routes

1357. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are many domestic air routes in the country known as loss making routes;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether Indian Airlines and Vayudoot are operating their flights on such routes;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the losses suffered during the last three years;

(e) whether any private operator has opted for any of such routes; and

(f) what action Government proposes to take to make the lose making air routes profitable in the near future?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Routes operated in the North Eastern Region, Jammu and Kashmir and and Andaman and Nicobar sectors are mainly the loss making routes.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The estimated losses suffered on these routes in the last three years by Indian Airlines and Vayudoot are the following:—

	North Eastern Region	Jammu & Kashmir	Andaman & Nicobar
	(Rs. in crores)		
1990-91	25.57	5.16	2.45
1991-92	41.97	6.03	2.28
1992-93	54.74	10.29	3.16